

# 4 ways volunteering benefits ... you

More than 1 billion people around the globe volunteer to help others. Whether working in a soup kitchen to feed the hungry or using your skills to help the needy, volunteers develop new skills while helping their communities.

Consider these great reasons to volunteer.


## It develops your job and leadership skills

According to [Forbes](#), volunteer work is one of the best ways to hone the leadership skills needed for top executive positions in the business world. Volunteering for the board of a nonprofit organization, for instance, can offer a young professional executive experience she would not find in her early professional life.

In a nationwide survey, one in five volunteers in Australia said they had learned skills that would help their current or future employment prospects. 26 percent said volunteering had helped them acquire an accreditation or qualification.

## It adds to your country's economic output

Unpaid economic work adds value to national economies. A survey in Bangladesh estimated the number of volunteers in that country as 16 million and their economic contribution at \$1.66 billion. In Britain, the Office for National Statistics says volunteers contribute \$37 billion to the British economy. That's 1.5 percent of British GDP.

Volunteers in Johannesburg, South Africa, deliver food and clothes to a local charity. (© AP )

## It changes your government for the better

A recent United Nations [report](#) says citizen volunteers help make governments more responsive and accountable to their citizens. It cited crowdsourced mapping of post-election violence in Kenya and citizen volunteers monitoring air quality in China as examples where volunteerism resulted in policy change.

## It makes you healthy

Not only is volunteering good for the world around you, it's good for your health — both mental and physical. Studies have shown that volunteering makes the volunteer feel more socially connected and helps ward off feelings of loneliness and depression. A study from Carnegie Mellon University suggests that adults who volunteer regularly are less likely to develop high blood pressure, a contributor to heart attacks, strokes and premature death.

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